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Cinematic Memory, The Discourse Of National Unity, And Semiotic Representation

Std. Yeşim Kumral
Girne American University, Kyrenia
yesimkumral77@gmail.com
Cell: +90 542 883 60 04
ORCID: 0009-0008-3643-6099

This study examines the visual, narrative, and ideological strategies through which the discourse of national unity and solidarity is constructed in Turkish Cypriot cinema. The sample consists of Shadows and Faces (Derviş Zaim, 2010/2011), The Unknown Prisoners Documentary (Cem Kar, 2011), and Code Name Venus (Tamer Garip, 2012). Methodologically, the study adopts a qualitative descriptive-analytical research design and combines semiotic analysis, content analysis, and comparative thematic interpretation. The theoretical framework is built on Roland Barthes's concepts of denotation, connotation, and myth; Christian Metz's approach to cinematic language; and the literatures on collective memory, trauma cinema, and representation. The films were coded at the levels of scene, character, space, colour, lighting, sound, archival material, testimony, and symbolic motif. These codes were then organized around four central themes: homeland and sacrifice, identity and belonging, memory and confrontation, and solidarity and resistance. The findings indicate that all three films produce a discourse of national unity, although they do so through different aesthetic and ideological registers. Shadows and Faces transforms historical trauma into an allegorical and ethical field of confrontation through the metaphor of shadow and screen; The Unknown Prisoners Documentary foregrounds collective mourning and the demand for justice through testimony, archival evidence, and the image of the missing body; Code Name Venus constructs a more explicit patriotic narrative through historical dramatization, heroism, sacrifice, and national belonging. The article argues that Turkish Cypriot cinema is not merely an artistic domain that reflects historical events, but also a communicative field of representation that organizes collective memory, gives meaning to trauma, and reproduces national identity.

Keywords: Turkish Cypriot cinema, national unity, semiotics, collective memory, trauma cinema, representation

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